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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 VILNIUS 000767

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EUR/NB, EUR/PPD, CA/VO, FSI/SPAS/CON, FRANKFURT  
FOR RCO - BARBARA ARMSTRONG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: WORK ON LITHUANIA'S ROADMAP

REF: VILNIUS 0718

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: We have begun taking concrete steps to implement Lithuania's Visa Waiver roadmap. Since the first meeting of our Consular Working Group (CWG) on June 29 (reftel), Consul discussed visa issues on a national radio program with an MFA rep as part of our joint Public Diplomacy campaign, GOL officials briefed us on detecting counterfeit Lithuanian passports, and we demonstrated our consular operations to CWG members. These successful joint efforts demonstrate the effectiveness of our working-level CWG and the potential for continued close cooperation on roadmap issues. END SUMMARY.

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Public Diplomacy Campaign Continues  
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2. Consul appeared with Vaidotas Verba, Director of the MFA's Consular Department, on national radio on July 14 to discuss the Visa Waiver Roadmap as part of our joint Public Diplomacy campaign. Working in tandem, we emphasized that accession to the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) would be a long-term process. We reviewed the requirements for joining the VWP and explained that visa waiver did not mean unrestricted visa-free travel. We, along with Verba, also emphasized that Lithuanians need to use their U.S. visas properly before there is any possibility of qualifying for the VWP.

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GOL Briefs on Lithuanian Document Fraud  
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3. Experts from the Lithuanian Forensic Document Center and the Consular Department hosted our consular officers, fraud investigators, and data-entry FSNs for a thorough fraud briefing on July 20. These officials briefed us in detail on the latest trends in Lithuanian passport fraud, including the various methods used by local passport forgers. We were particularly interested in how to detect photo substituted new Lithuanian passports and will share their detection techniques via septel. In addition to significantly increasing our abilities to detect Lithuanian passport fraud, the briefing showed us the GOL's determination -- and ability -- to safeguard the security of Lithuanian travel documents, another roadmap element.

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MFA Reps Observe Visa Operations  
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4. (SBU) We opened the consular section to the Lithuanian members of the CWG on July 21, giving them the opportunity to see first-hand how visas are processed in Vilnius. After briefing the CWG on how applicants are processed, we demonstrated the various tools we use to investigate visa fraud, including the resources available to us through the various consular databases. To help illustrate the extent of the information available to us, we pulled up the visa history of one CWG member who had obtained visas at a number of different overseas posts. The Lithuanian officials also had an opportunity to learn about the types of applicants we see and the information they provide. The Lithuanian officials were appreciative of the opportunity to see our operations first hand and learn about U.S. border security measures, from which they intended to draw to improve their own operations.

5. (SBU) The CWG members also had an opportunity to observe routine visa interviews during the day and responded that they were impressed by the professional manner in which we conducted the interviews. They were very grateful for the opportunity and said that they came away with a much better understanding of why some Lithuanians do not qualify for U.S. visas. Verba noted that the experience will help the MFA reps in responding to visa complaints they receive, as they now have "seen for themselves" how the visa application process works.

Comment: Tangible Benefits

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16. (SBU) These recent joint endeavors are evidence of the effectiveness of our working-level CWG and, we believe, only the first success of many such collaborations yet to come. While both sides recognize that visa waiver is still far in the future, the roadmap framework allows us a unique opportunity to engage our Lithuanian consular officials on a number of different issues.

KELLY